

it's a long way back from seventeen by t_hens

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Summary:

Richie is branching out from stand up and is trying to write a book, so his agent books him a week in a fancy hotel on the east coast so he can focus. he's not expecting to see Eddie, the boy he loved when he was seventeen, who happens to be the manager at said hotel.

it's a long way back from seventeen

Author's Note:

- For [obsessivelymoody](#).

this is for Moody, because she's become my best friend in a short amount of time and I'm sure I would have lost my marbles ages ago without her <3

The cab jerked to a stop, waking Richie from the nap he'd been trying to take.

“Here,” the Uber driver grunted.

Richie grabbed his bags and stumbled out of the car, the vehicle leaving almost before the door was shut.

“Fuck you too, dude.”

He stared up at the hotel his agent had booked him a week at and sighed. It was grand and looked expensive, and while that wasn't really an issue, he felt out of place in his jeans and worn hoodie that didn't do much to shield him from the bitter cold of the east coast in late fall.

The hotel was even grander inside; crystal chandeliers sparkling in the lights and gold and cherry wood made it feel like some sort of bougy cabin, which he supposed it was.

“Hello sir. How can I help you this evening?”

Richie turned his attention to the receptionist, who's smile was so strained it looked painful. He tried to lighten the mood with the joke but it just made her face a bit more pinched so he took the key card she handed him and shuffled to his room before he made anyone else's face look like that.

The elevator was just as fancy as the rest of the place, lined with gold rimmed mirrors on each side. It was personally a little too much for Richie's taste, usually avoiding a mirror when he could, but he

supposed it was nice in a rich fuck kinda way.

The doors opened and his room was only a few paces to the right thankfully. Though it wasn't late in the evening by any means, the flight had given him a headache and he was ready to sleep off the jet lag before trying to get some writing done, which was the whole point of this stupid trip.

Richie slid the key into the door, the light flashing green right away and threw the door open, ready to fall face first into his bed. He registered a shout before his brain caught on to what he was seeing.

An older woman was laying in bed, an honest to god wool nightgown on, and a man he presumed was her husband was standing naked in the middle of the room, trying to put on pajamas.

The woman shouted again and Richie slammed his eyes shut, knowing he'd probably never get the sight of the strangers wrinkly package out of his mind.

"Um, I think this is my room?" He said, eyes still shut.

"Well there must be some kind of mistake," the lady said scandalized, as if Richie had purposely interrupted their bed time.

"I'll go figure it out."

Richie backed up and fumbled his way out of the room, trying not to listen as the woman told her husband to put his pants on for heaven's sake.

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The receptionist gave Richie her strained smile when he came into view, opening her mouth to probably ask what she could do but Richie slapped the key card onto the counter and told her there'd been some sort of mistake.

She had to call her manager, because apparently she was new and didn't know how to properly work the system, probably why Richie had gotten an eyeful in the first place.

Richie expected the manager to be some old man with a big mustache and pocket watch (apparently he thought all older men looked like the monopoly man) but was surprised when it was someone that, even though he hadn't seen him in decades, he knew exactly who it was.

"Eddie Kaspbrak?" His voice cracked and he wanted to die right there. *'Way to play it cool Richie.'*

"Richie?" Eddie's eyes were just as wide and Bambi-like as Richie remembered.

He had grown into himself though. He was still shorter than Richie, probably by six inches or so, and his brown hair was a tad longer than Richie could recall seeing, but it suited him, softened the smattering of crow's feet in the corners of his eyes that looked unfairly cute on him.

"Yeah. What's up?" He asked smartly.

Eddie's lips tugged into a reluctant smile and he looked like he was on the verge of calling Richie a dumbass, just like old times, but he seemed to remember he was at work.

"Hello sir, what seems to be the problem." He had a no-nonsense business voice and Richie felt an urge deep in his gut to ruffle his hair and make him a little undone.

"I think someone is in my room? Or I was in theirs? Either way I interrupted what I hope was an older couple's bed time."

Eddie cocked his head to the side, considering Richie's words and when he seemed to understand what he was implying, his cheeks pinked and Richie really wanted to say something else, see if the pink still would spread up to his ears like he knew it did.

"It looks like the room you booked got double booked by mistake."

“Okay...” Richie asked, unsure what he was supposed to do, clear across the country in November.

“The room is booked for two weeks, so I’ll see what else we have available.”

There was a lot more clicking and Richie couldn’t help but smile a little at the furrow that appeared between his brow as he typed and clicked until he met Richie’s eyes, a smile tugging at his own lips upon seeing Richie stare.

“So it looks like we have the honeymoon suite, and it’s available for the duration of your stay. It’s the only room we have available,” he added apologetically.

God, nothing like a honeymoon suite to remind him of how alone he was and how long it had been since he’d gotten laid. Great start to the week.

“Well, looks like I’m staying in the honeymoon suite, eh Eds?”

“Don’t call me that,” he answered, like a reflex. His face was pinched but rather than making him look mad, he just looked cute and Richie desperately wanted to pinch the dimples popping in his cheeks. Peeking out at Richie like an old friend.

There were a few more clicks and he was handing Richie a new card and coupons for complimentary drinks at the hotel’s restaurant and bar.

“Have a nice stay Mr. Tozier.” Richie gave him a look until he dipped his head, cheeks a deep pink and mumbled “Have a nice stay, Richie,” so quietly he almost missed it.

Richie’s step had a little more pep in it as he made his way to the elevator.

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Thankfully, the honeymoon suite wasn’t of the gaudy variety that

Richie had been dreading. There were no heart shaped objects, and the only real thing that made it seem ‘honeymoonish’ was the pair of plush robes hanging on the bathroom door and the empty ice bucket he imagined was for the bottles of champagne the happy couple this room was intended for.

He threw his bags on the bed and felt his body slump forward. It had been a long ass day, flying all the way from LA to this ‘quaint and classy’ hotel, which was actually more like a resort, but whatever. Richie’s agent was supposedly friends with the owner and was giving him a deal, like that still didn’t mean entirely too much money for Richie to get drunk and pretend to write for a week.

The bed looked mighty tempting, but a growl from his stomach suggested he eat something. There was a mini fridge that probably had lots of overpriced snacks he could munch on, but the restaurant was supposed to be good, so Richie grabbed his free drink vouchers and hoped they served greasy food, and that they would be willing to serve it to him at the bar.

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Turns out they did *not* serve the greasy fried food Richie was very fond of, but they did let him eat his steak and baked potato at the bar, so he was willing to call it a win.

The bartender kept the highball glass next to him filled and the food was actually pretty great. There wasn’t much company, it being Monday but that was just fine. He knew he should be thinking about the book, and instead wondered how the fuck he was gonna finish this stupid project that had turned into a far bigger deal than he’d anticipated. He should have kept his mouth shut when he told his agent he had an idea for a book. It’d been nothing but meetings and publicist for the past six months.

“Aren’t you that comedian?”

Richie looked up and the bartender was looking back and forth between him and the tv, which was on the comedy channel for some reason and one of his old stand ups was playing.

“Uh, yeah,” Richie admitted a little sheepishly. His old work really wasn’t anything to write home about and always hated that it was most people saw from him first.

“Huh,” the man said, not saying anything more, and left Richie alone to finish his steak and wonder what the fuck that was supposed to mean.

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Richie had only been back in his room for about ninety seconds, just long enough to kick his shoes across the room, when there was a knock on the door. He hesitated for a second, not sure if he should answer, lest more bizarre bullshit happened, but the knock sounded again, so he resigned himself to answer.

Of all the things Richie expected to be on the other side of the door, it was not Eddie.

“Uh,” he said dumbly.

“I’m sorry it’s so late, I forgot to have the complimentary champagne delivered, so I wanted to bring it up and apologize for earlier.”

A million responses flew through Richie’s mind, and he felt a little speechless, which was insane. Words were his life.

“Well thanks Eds. You wanna stay for a night cap?” His mouth supplied without his brain making a conscious decision.

He hesitated, clearly unsure and wringing his hands, but he glanced down at his fancy smartwatch and looked back up at Richie before giving a half shrug. “I guess I am technically off the clock.”

Amazed he’d actually said yes, Richie stood back to let him in, but he hesitated again.

“Can you give me like five minutes? I want to go change.”

“Do you live here?”

Red crawled up the man’s face, and he straightened his spine, fists

clenched at his sides. “Yes, do you have a problem with that?”

He was so fucking cute, especially with a scowl on his face and Richie had to resist pinching his flushed cheeks. “No, of course not.”

“Oh. Well good.”

Eddie paused for a second then turned, stalking away from the room, and Richie felt his stomach sink. How did he fuck up that bad already?

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Assuming he was alone for the rest of the night, Richie stripped down to his underwear and climbed morosely into bed. He was flipping through the expanse of tv channels, his mind spinning too much to actually pay attention to any of it. He was debating the merits of jerking off to help him fall asleep when there was a knock on the door.

Richie scrambled, pulling on one of the fancy robes off the door and pulled the front door open as fast as he could. As he hoped, Eddie was stood in front of the door, wearing sweats and a worn NYU hoodie. His feet were in old man loafers and Richie felt a stab of familiar fondness well up in his throat.

“Glad to see time hasn’t changed your killer fashion sense.”

Eddie rolled his eyes and pushed past him to enter the room. He looked around with a frown as he saw how much of a mess Richie had made in the few hours he’d been there.

“Don’t look at me like that. I’m on a retreat, I can be messy if I want.”

“What sort of retreat are you on? Dumbasses Anonymous?”

Richie’s lips twitched into a small smile as he rubbed the back of his neck. “Uh, writing technically. I guess.”

“Oh.” Eddie cocked his head to the side. “So you *do* write your own material.”

Later when he was alone he would analyze the fuck out of the fact that Eddie knew about him at least enough to know that there was material that he didn't write. Or used to, not write.

"I didn't in the early days. But I have for the past few years. This isn't stand up though. I'm trying to write a book."

Eddie gave him an impressed look, as if he didn't realize Richie was capable of doing something so adult and dignified.

"Don't look so surprised asshole," he said, trying for familiarity and felt success when Eddie gave him a light, playful shove.

"I thought we were drinking champagne dickhead."

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Being with Eddie, doing nothing more than sitting on the plush love seat and channel surfing, taking turns filling up their cups with champagne, was the best time he'd had in a long, long time. They didn't talk much more than doing the generic catching up and bickering over what show to watch, but that was okay. It felt easy in a way he hadn't felt in anyone's company since he left for college.

When they'd parted - Richie at eighteen and his whole life was packed into his shitty honda civic he had to mow lawns for three summers to save up enough money to buy. He was driving to Chicago because Northwestern had a decent Arts department where he could study acting and comedy and they had a decent improv scene.

The only downside was that it was seven hundred miles from where Eddie would be at NYU.

Leaving everyone had been hard. He and Eddie had been part of a group of friends, The Losers, and they were his best friends in the world. Bill, their quiet but steady leader and Ben and Mike, the quiet and smart ones, both achingly sweet and watchful over them all. Bev - with her halo of red hair and freckled cheeks, a grin and a cigarette always perched on her lips. Stan - who Eddie had left to attend NYU with, was painfully honest sometimes, but only because he loved with his whole heart and expected it right back.

The day before Richie left for Chicago he cried for two hours straight before getting hold of himself and leaving for the goodbye party they were having in Stan's downstairs. And he joked and laughed like nothing was wrong, even though his heart ached knowing they wouldn't all just be five minutes down the block.

Leaving them had sucked, but leaving Eddie had been worse. They had been toeing the line between friends and more for practically the entire time they'd known each other and it had taken entirely too long for them to finally stop messing around and actually *be* together, but it had been less than a year and not nearly enough time.

Eddie laughed at something on the tv and it snapped Richie back to the present. He stared, not trying to be too obvious, but he didn't really care if he got caught. It had been so long since he'd seen Eddie, his fault more than anything, but now that he was sitting in front of Richie, comfortable and content in their shared space, and it felt like no time had passed.

Richie still wanted to kiss him as badly as he had when he was twelve, thirteen, all those years until they had been seventeen and finally took the plunge.

As if he could read Richie's mind, Eddie looked over and caught him staring, a ill-hidden smug smile on his lips and he gave Richie a not so subtle once over. He was still in the robe and became painfully aware that all he had on underneath was a pair of boxers.

"Do you remember Bill's seventeenth birthday? That party we had down in the basement?" Eddie turned his body so it was facing more towards Richie than the tv. He rested an arm over the side of the couch and let his covered leg rest next to the partial bare part of Richie's thigh.

Richie gulped and nodded. Of course he remembered.

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No one but losers had been in attendance, but none of them really minded. They had all made casual, more generic, friendships since high school had started, but none of them had been anywhere close

to the connection the seven of them had.

The evening had started out simple, casual, everyone passing around the shitty wine coolers that Bev had stolen from her Dad's new girlfriend that tasted like ass, but was strong enough that after a few passes everyone was a bit more loose-limbed and relaxed.

Somehow the idea of seven minutes in heaven came up and it was with blushing and nervous agreements that they all agreed to participate. Bill, the birthday boy, got to go first and he and Stan stumbled to the closet, coming out exactly seven minutes later. Stan had a raspberry colored mark just visible under the collar of his shirt and Bill wore a smug smile.

Ben and Mike went next and Bev went in with Eddie, which made something white hot and jealous settle in Richie's gut.

When it was Eddie's turn, the bottle span and span until it slowly stopped in front of Richie's stunned face. No one looked particularly surprised when Richie made a stupid joke about it being the wrong Kaspbrak but he almost went headfirst into the coffee table in his haste to get to the closet.

They shut the door behind them and stood apart from each other, both faces burning red.

"We don't have to do anything," Richie told him, his words a direct contradiction to the way his heart was beating fast in his chest. "Besides, I'm sure I can't measure up to Bev."

Eddie shook his head but didn't insult Richie like he expected. Instead he looked up at Richie with his head cocked to the side as if he was studying him like there would be a test on the planes of his awkward face.

"Bev and I didn't do anything. We sat down and she talked about what a crush she had on Ben."

Richie snorted and nodded. Everyone knew they had it bad for each other, they weren't exactly subtle.

Eddie surprised him by stepping closer and clutching at the edges of

Richie's Hawaiian shirt. "Are you gonna kiss me or you just gonna stand there for the next six minutes?"

Richie's body was doing what it was told without thinking twice. Eddie bossing him around was something he would never admit to anyone that he enjoyed. He thought about getting ordered around by Eddie whenever another rush of puberty hormones would leave him waking up with a dick so hard it was painful.

The instant their lips met, Eddie went limp against where he was pressed against Richie's chest. He was sure everyone knew all his talk of fucking and getting laid were exaggerations, lies if you really got down to it. But kissing Eddie was like breathing air; he didn't have to think about how to do it, he just was, and with the way small whimpers were being pressed against Richie's lips made him feel a confidence that was maybe a bit misearned, but he was making *Eddie* make those sounds so he couldn't be too bad, right?

Richie broke the kiss to mouth along the soft skin of his jaw. "Fuck. I've wanted to do this for so long."

"Rich," Eddie panted into his mouth, hands grabbing eagerly, trying to press them closer together.

Before either of their hands had settled and while they were still in the middle of a heated kiss, the closet door opened, the timer going off in Bill's hand.

It was awkward for about two seconds until Bev wolf whistled and the tension was broken. Eddie hid his face in Richie's shirt and he held him close, grinning so wide and pleased at his friends that his jaw ached.

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Richie absentmindedly rubbed along the edge of his jaw like he was still standing in that cramped closet with Eddie in his arms.

But he wasn't.

He was sitting with an Eddie he hadn't seen in almost three decades, but he still felt the same desire - need - to be close to him. The need

to make him laugh and yell and curse at Richie till he was red in the face and they couldn't keep their hands off of each other.

That's not what was happening though.

Although Eddie had shifted closer, Richie hadn't bridged the gap, not sure if he could trust himself with taking things slow or just having Eddie for a short amount of time. They lived on opposite sides of the country. Would rekindling an old flame when it could only burn for such a short time really do either of them any good?

Richie must have had a funny look on his face, because Eddie leaned closer and pressed his thumb between the crease in Richie's brow. "You're frowning too much. You're gonna give yourself wrinkles."

He snorted, batting the hand away, trying to ignore the hurt in Eddie's eyes. "I already have wrinkles Spaghetti Head, not much I can do about them now."

Eddie leaned back into his seat, bringing his legs to tuck up under his chin. There was guilt churning in his gut, but he didn't know how to say *'I still might be slightly in love with you, even though I disappeared from your life at eighteen and now we're fucking forty and I'm still too much of a chicken shit to do the right thing.'*

The silence between them wasn't comfortable any longer and Richie racked his brains to try and think of something to say, some joke that could get them back on track, but once the episode of Golden Girls that they'd agreed on ended, Eddie stood up and fake yawned.

"I think I'm gonna head to my room and go to bed. I gotta get up early."

It was barley ten in the evening, but Richie didn't protest, just stood and walked Eddie to the door. He walked a few paces out of the door before turning around and pulling Richie into a tight, but brief, hug.

"I'm glad you're here. I've missed you."

Richie's mouth was open and gaping unattractive as Eddie turned on his heel and walked towards the stairs.

It took him a few seconds to gather the brain cells to close the door. He turned the tv off and climbed into bed, trying to pretend that he didn't miss the feel of Eddie's arms around him already.

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In truth, Richie didn't really expect to see much of Eddie while he was there. Though Eddie apparently lived on site, he was a manager and the assumption was that he would be busy during the day.

But as Richie crunched on the plate of fries sat next to his open laptop, he almost choked when Eddie sat down in the recliner next to him in the lounging area.

"Am I in trouble?"

Eddie snorted and raised his eyebrow. "*Should* you be in trouble?"

Richie shook his head quickly and focused on chewing and swallowing the food in his mouth before he said more. He always used to get yelled at for talking with his mouth full.

"I just don't have anything going on for the next hour or so, and needed to kill some time. I saw you in here earlier and I thought maybe you could use some company."

Eddie's ears were so red there was practically steam coming out of them. He looked just like he used to when Richie would really piss him off and Eddie would be getting ready to let him have it. He didn't look mad now though, he looked embarrassed.

"Always happy for company, Eds," he said gently, taking pity on him.

Eddie sagged against his plush chair and gave a puff of air that blew a fluff of brunette hair out of his face. "So what are you writing?"

It was Richie's turn to turn red, stuttering out nonsense sounds instead of words.

He had a hard time telling people about what he was writing, partly just because he didn't really *know* what he was writing. All he really had since the beginning was a vague idea, which had turned slightly

less vague under the prompting of publishers and his agent and every other fucknut in the industry that wanted to hop on the book writing bandwagon.

“It’s really just a rough idea right now,” he finally said.

Eddie nodded understandingly. “You’ll figure it out.”

He didn’t offer more explanation, just sat there sure of his words and a small smile pulling at his lips.

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He got called away sooner than an hour later - some soccer mom not satisfied with the amount of pillows on her king size bed. They said their goodbyes and Richie sat there for another two hours before giving up and packing up his things.

Once he’d stored his things into his room, he let his feet carry him down to the bar where he took the same stool from yesterday and ordered a whiskey. He watched the reality show about housewives that was playing on the tv and sipped his drink. He tried not to let his thoughts wander to Eddie, and what he was doing. He tried not to think about how it was almost eight, which around the time that Eddie had came to his room last night. And how maybe he would come by tonight?

After he swallowed the last of his drink, he got up to head back to his room, trying to tell himself he wasn’t going because he hoped Eddie would stop by.

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Eddie did stop by.

Twenty minutes after eight, after Richie had just enough time to change into the nicest pajamas he brought (a worn Iron Maiden tee that had a hole in the collar and plaid pants that left two solid inches of his knobby ankles exposed) and put on a fresh coat of deodorant, there was a soft knock on the door and Richie had to physically stop himself from running to open it.

Similar to the night before, Eddie was dressed in sweats and a hoodie. Tonight's was a newish looking grey one that came from some sort of aquarium in Florida.

"Didn't picture you as much of a Floridian," Richie said, pointing to the hoodie as Eddie brushed him aside and headed straight to the couch.

"Mike sent it to me. He's been living there for a few months now."

At the mention of their old friend, a warmth bloomed in Richie's chest. It wasn't the same feeling he got around Eddie; that was more of an all-consuming need to be near him and have his attention focused solely on him. But it was like a crackling fire on a cold evening. An embrace with strong and warm arms. It made him miss all of his friends so bad it felt like a gaping hole in his chest he'd been aware of all this time but tried not to pay attention to.

"How's he doing? How's everyone doing?"

They hadn't talked much about their friends the night before. Richie had wanted to know about Eddie, though he only got the vaguest responses when he prodded.

"They're good. Ben and Bev have been living in Denver for a few months now, where Ben's architecture firm is located.. Bill is an English professor at some liberal arts college in San Francisco. Stan's an Accountant in Atlanta."

He said it all quickly, matter of factly, while he made himself a scotch on the rocks from the mini bar. He sat himself down on the couch and looked at Richie expectantly.

"Well are you gonna stand there and stare all not or are we gonna drink and watch the Golden Girls?"

Richie's face cracked into a smile and he nodded. "Yeah. Yeah, I'll get a drink."

He grabbed the first thing his hand landed on - fucking peppermint schnapps - and poured it over ice in the crystal tumblers that came with the room.

Eddie turned the tv on and searched the channels until he found what he was looking for and tossed it on the coffee table, taking a sip of his drink.

“How did writing go today?” He asked politely.

Richie shrugged and took his own drink, wincing at the harsh peppermint flavor. “It was okay. I’m having a hard time getting past this one part and it’s really frustrating.”

“Is there anything I can help with?”

God, Eddie was so good. When they were younger, even when Eddie was royally pissed off by something Richie said or did, he always made sure the scrapes on his knobby knees and elbows were clean and bandaged. He always saved enough money to get Richie an ice cream cone at the drug store. Always looked after him and made sure he was okay. Time didn’t seem to have changed that.

There were a million things Richie could say in response. Things like: I don’t think I’m really cut out to be a writer, so you’d be wasting your time trying to help me. Or: If you helped me, you’d see that I started writing a character this afternoon that had your warm brown eyes and deep dimples and you’ll know that I never moved on. I’ll be vulnerable.

Instead, he said “Nah. I think I’ll just sleep on it and hope I come up with some sort of inspiration.”

Eddie nodded and turned back to the tv.

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Eddie hadn’t stayed long the night before, only staying for two episodes before saying he was getting a headache and should get some rest. Richie tried not to let his face betray how disappointed he was.

He went to sleep early, waking up too early as a result. The time on his phone told him it was barely after five in the morning. The sky was still dark outside, but Richie knew he wouldn’t be able to fall back asleep. Fucking insomnia.

After crawling out of bed and giving his teeth a quick brush and slathering on some deodorant, he decided to try out the hotel's gym. He wasn't normally much of a fitness person, but since Eddie had left last night, there had been low thrum of anxiety pulsing under his skin and his therapist had always suggested exercise as an outlet for all of his nervous energy.

It never occurred to him that there would be other people in the gym, and it especially never occurred to him that Eddie would be in there; shorts just as short as they had been back in Derry in the summers, his shirt off revealing an unfairly fit body.

There was a sharp intake of breath that took him a few seconds to realize *he* was the one that made the noise. Thankfully Eddie had headphones in and was focusing on changing the weights on some machine that looked more like a torture device than a work out machine to notice his presence. He backed out of the room slowly, tailing it back to his room to take a cold, cold shower.

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Eddie joined him again for a bit in the afternoon, sitting quietly next to Richie in the lounge chairs, an area Richie had claimed as his own for the time being. It was the quietest place in the hotel, and the only one with recliners.

Richie smiled at him shyly, unable to get the sight of Eddie's half naked body out of his mind as he looked at him. It wasn't like Richie had never seen Eddie naked before, but back then he had permission. He didn't know if he was allowed to want him the same way. If he was allowed to look.

"How's it going?"

His body made some sort of gesturing/shrugging motion and Eddie nodded solemnly, but the smile he was trying to hide was betrayed by the cave of dimples in his cheek. "You'd think you'd be better at words, being a comedian and all."

Richie's eyebrows raised and he couldn't resist confirming his suspicions. "So you watch my stand up?"

Eddie flushed and scowled at him. “Not on purpose. I was forced.”

God, Richie wanted to kiss him. His finger twitched, wanting to wind themselves into Eddie’s neat hair and ruffle him up a bit.

“I’m sure it was a real punishment for you.”

“It was! Your jokes are shit,” Eddie sniffed.

Richie threw his head back, unable to contain the bubble of laughter in his chest. God, Eds was always such a spitfire. That was Richie’s favorite thing about him. He’d never just take Richie’s shit, he’d fling right back and ten times meaner and it just made him fonder and fonder.

“What are you smirking about asshole?”

“You’re cute Eds.”

Some sort of strangled noise left him, but before he could reply, his phone was buzzing and Eddie was having to leave to go attend to some ‘emergency.’

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Richie kept his routine of trying to write until his brain throbbed then ditching his stuff in his room to have a quick dinner and whiskey at the bar before returning to his room and waiting for Eddie to come make himself home in Richie’s space.

Eight came and went, and Richie didn’t think much of it. Then nine arrived and followed by ten until Richie finally got up from the recliner he’d been sitting rigidly in, finally telling himself that Eddie would not be showing up at his door, apologizing about being late.

He didn’t sleep at all that night, just tossed and turned and wondered if he’d done anything wrong. Had he overstepped by calling Eddie cute? That seemed tame compared to some of the things he’d said to get a rise out of Eddie before, but maybe he didn’t have the right to make comments about him like that anymore. He’d lost that privilege when he never called or write from Chicago.

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Richie hadn't come to any conclusions when the sun woke him up from the measly ten minutes he'd been able to not be completely awake. The idea of having to haul himself out of bed and get ready to go pretend like he knew what he was doing sounded exhausted, so when his alarm rang too loud, filling the room with an angry wail, he silenced it and rolled back over.

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At some point in the morning after the getting ready movements from the other patrons and it got quiet again Richie had been able to fall into an overly exhausted semi coma. It wasn't good sleep, but it was deep. When he was finally able to peel his eyes open and actually keep them open, it was nearing five in the evening.

"Fuck." His sleep schedule was gonna be so fucked now.

His hand reached blindly for his glasses and he shoved them on his face, opening his phone to deal with all the missed calls and texts from Steve who wanted a writing update. He was in the middle of telling him that he didn't have jack shit and this trip was a waste of his money when there was a sharp knock on his door.

Eddie was standing on the other side of the door, wearing the same suit he'd been wearing yesterday afternoon. He looked like he'd slept in a car and had been running on straight anxiety and caffeine.

"Eds?"

"I'm sorry I didn't come by last night. I had a thing I had to go take care of."

"Really?" Richie scoffed.

"What do you mean, *really*?" Eddie barked at him, face going from nervous and apologetic to angry in a split second.

"You just leave your job and disappear for like, a whole day and it's no big deal?"

Eddie saw through his bullshit - he always had. So instead of screaming at him, he was surging inside and wrapping an arm around Richie's neck so he could press their lips together.

Richie's body was on autopilot and wrapped his arms so tight around Eddie's middle that he gasped into his mouth, allowing Richie to slip his tongue in and deepen the kiss.

Fuck. It was so good, even better than he remembered. He let himself get lost in it for a second, but Eddie was pulling back too soon and Richie missed the feeling of his mouth the second it disappeared.

"Fuck. I shouldn't have done that."

Something like lead settled in Richie's stomach and he was worried for a second that he might puke all over their shoes, but thankfully it passed. Instead of crying, like he wanted to, Richie screwed up his face and nodded, moving back so he could close the door on Eddie's still shocked face.

-

Richie got a text on his phone from a new number around seven. He saw *'This is Eddie'* in the text preview and swiped the notification away immediately. He sat his phone back down on the bed and linked his fingers over his stomach, mostly to stop himself from reaching for the phone and reading the message.

He lasted all of ninety seconds, grabbing the device and fumbling with entering his unlock code. The message was long, so Richie had to spend a few seconds digging through the blankets to find his glasses. Once he could actually see, he started to read.

'Hi Richie, This is Eddie. I got your number from your account. I know that's not technically allowed, but I knew you weren't gonna open the door because you're still a stubborn asshole. I want to explain why I was gone. I want to actually talk to you, and not just over a text or call. If I come over, please open the door.'

Richie didn't reply, but he unlocked the door before he ducked out onto the balcony attached to his room and lit the singular joint he'd

brought as a reward for finishing his story, but so far, nothing of this trip had gone to plan.

-

The door opened behind him, and Richie shuffled to start putting out the joint, but he heard Eddie's voice along with his footsteps. "You don't have to put it out. I'm not gonna tattle on you."

Richie looked up from his spot on the floor and squinted at him, not able to see much of him since the lights from the room cast him in a shadow. He expected some remark about how gross it was to sit on the floor of the balcony instead of the fancy plush outdoor furniture, but instead, Eddie sunk down to sit beside him, plucking the joint out of his hand and taking a deep drag.

He was impressed for about half a second, Eddie's coughing fit revealing his inexperience. Richie took it back from him, taking a hit and holding it for a second before blowing perfect circles into the navy sky.

"Show off," Eddie choked at him, still trying to catch his breath.

"Practice makes perfect Eds."

"Don't call me that," he said automatically, beath finally starting to even out

Richie took the last hit and stubbed it against the bottom of his shoe. Beside him, Eddie adjusted how he was sitting so that he was leaning against the rail of the balcony, facing Richie rather than the manicured lawn below.

"Afraid of heights?"

Eddie shook his head, but didn't offer any other explanation, just kept his eyes on Richie until he felt the tips of his ears heat and he had to look away.

"Have I told you how I got my job here?"

Richie shook his head. Eddie took a deep breath and continued.

“When I was married-” his words were slightly cut off by the sharp intake of Richie’s breath. There were a million things he wanted to ask, but Eddie plowed through, as if he knew once Richie started talking he probably wouldn’t stop. “My wife, Myra, and I were given a two week stay at this hotel, as a wedding present. We never used it because she didn’t like to travel.”

“Isn’t this place like, two hours from Manhattan?”

Eddie pursed his lips, nodding, continuing.

“Yeah, so about a year ago I was sitting at home on the couch with Myra and she was talking about this new diet that we needed to try because apparently the diet we were already on was too high in fat and would increase our cholesterol, and suddenly I realized I’d married my mother.”

A your mom joke was on the tip of Richie’s tongue, but Eddie gave him a stern finger and said “Shut the fuck up, Richie. I *know* okay?”

Richie mimed locking his lips and pretending to throw the key. It made Eddie give him a reluctant smile and he continued.

“*Anyway*, I just had this major panic attack and started freaking out. I quit my job and pierced my ear,” he pulled his right ear lobe towards Richie even though it was dark and he could barely even see Eddie. “I took it out right away because I was afraid it was going to get infected.

“Myra tried to have me admitted to a psychiatric unit, but I told her I wasn’t crazy, I just didn’t love her and I left.”

Richie remembered Eddie’s mom, she’d been a real piece of work. She’d spent most of Eddie’s life telling him how sick and fragile he was, having him try different diets and medications for illnesses she watched get talked about on the news. Once there was a report that said someone in a hospital four states away had been diagnosed with bird flu and Eddie hadn’t been allowed to leave the house for two weeks.

It wasn't hard to imagine Eddie marrying someone he thought loved him, and was trying to take care of him, when really, they were just feeding both of their worst natures. It broke Richie's heart to know that Eddie had escaped Derry, but he hadn't escaped what made him leave in the first place.

"That was really brave of you," Richie said softly.

Eddie was shaking his head stubbornly, never able to take any genuine compliments. He never believed he was as good and wonderful as he was.

"It really wasn't. It wasn't brave to marry someone I didn't love because I thought that would help me forget how alone I was."

"Eddie, you didn't have to marry someone you didn't love. You're a catch; I'm sure there were people lining up to get with you."

"I didn't want anyone. I hadn't wanted anyone but you my whole life and then I lost you, so what was the point anyway?"

It was like a punch to the gut and Richie felt like there was a hand around his throat keeping him from being able to get the words out that he needed to say.

Eddie continued, not looking at Richie. "When I left, I just came here because I didn't really have anywhere else to go. I didn't realize Stan's dad owned it, and when I told him what had happened, he offered me a job and lodging on the spot, and so I took it."

It took a few minutes for Richie to get his thoughts in order and clear his throat enough that he could ask, "What does this have to do with the emergency?"

Steeling himself with a deep breath, Eddie said, "Because I had to go file for divorce."

"Wait, you're still *married*?" Richie said too loudly for the setting. He saw Eddie wince before he replied.

"I always meant to do it, but I there was a part of me that wanted it as a backup plan, in case I really was having a psychotic break. I

knew Myra would take me back and would let me slide back into my life if I just asked.”

“I still don’t understand.”

Eddie gave him an exasperated look and moved to crawl into Richie’s lap, shocking the hell out of him.

“I left to get a divorce because seeing you again just reminded me why I never wanted someone else. I’ve loved you this whole time and I didn’t want anything to stand in the way of it.”

“But.” Richie was so confused. How was this happening. “But I left. I didn’t call and I didn’t write and I just fucked off and deserted you.”

Eddie leaned away from him, hurt etched into every line on his face. “Oh. I’m sorry. I must of read things wrong.”

He started to move off of Richie, but his brain caught up just in time, winding his arms around Eddie’s waist.

“No, you didn’t. I just. I can’t believe you can forgive me for that. I knew I fucked up, knew it when it was happening, but I just couldn’t stop myself. I thought you’d be better off without me. I thought New York would be better than anything I could offer you. I was a chicken shit.”

Eddie kissed him softly, slowly. “I’m not saying that it didn’t fucking suck, but I’d rather have you now, despite all that, than not at all. I know you were scared, I was too. I could have tried too but I let that fear and the voice in my head tell me it had been bad and wrong, but it’s not. It took me a long time to realize that. Too long.”

“I’ll spend the rest of my life trying to prove how sorry I am. Treating you right, like you deserve.”

“Yes please,” Eddie breathed into his ear.

Richie captured him into a kiss and they stayed outside until the tips of their noses were numb and Eddie was complaining about the

warning signs of hypothermia.

-

Despite how much they both wanted to, Eddie did not stay the night. They'd laid in bed and talked in quiet tones between breaks of making out. It was like he was seventeen again, standing in that closet with Eddie as his heart tried beating out of his chest and he was so happy to finally have those lips he'd longed for so long finally against his own.

After extracting himself from Richie's arms, he placed a soft kiss to his stubbly cheek and gave him a smile so fond and loving that Richie could feel the emotions welling up in his chest.

"I gotta go to bed, but I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

Richie nodded and he got a lingering kiss that made him want to pull Eddie back and then he was gone and the door was shut softly behind him.

He laid starfished on his back for almost an hour later, thinking of ways to keep him from fucking up again.

-

Richie woke to the sound of the door being knocked on and for a half a second he thought it was Eddie, but upon opening the door, someone was standing next to a loaded room service tray.

"Good morning Mr. Tozier. Here is your room service order, is there anything else I can do for you?"

Richie eyed the cart, loaded with every breakfast food in the county, and eyed the staff member, confusion mounting until he spotted a simple white envelope with his name on it.

"Oh. Uh yeah. Can you just put it over there?"

He moved and opened the door so they could pass and place the cart by the couch. Richie scrambled for his wallet and gave them a tip, a twenty because that was all the cash he had, and shut the door,

making himself walk slowly to the envelope rather than run for it.

A tiny, *tiny* part of him felt bad about absolutely shredding the fancy stationery, but that disappeared when his words started reading the neat, precise handwriting he would recognize anywhere, even almost thirty years since he'd seen it last.

'Good morning Rich,

I hope you slept well and that you're hungry. I know your favorite cereal is Lucky Charms, but you're a forty year old man and don't need a pile of sugar to start your day. I ordered you most of the breakfast menu, so you had a variety but if there isn't at least one egg and part of that oatmeal gone, the next room delivery you're gonna get is me kicking your ass.

Anyway Trashmouth. Thank you for understanding why I didn't stay last night. I want this, whatever this is between us, but it will take some time for me to have all my shit figured out. Thank you for waiting for me.

Eat and take a shower and I'll see you tonight. I get off at five.

Love,

Eddie Spaghetti

There was a sob building in his throat, but he choked it back, not bothering to wipe away the few stray tears that managed to escape.

Fuck. He was so happy he thought he might explode. He read the letter four more times, taking in Eddie's neat handwriting and lovely words until his stomach growled and he remembered all the food he had.

-

By the time Richie had finished eating and was heading to the shower, it felt like he gained a hundred pounds. He'd tried a bite of everything, each item better than the next. He made sure to text Eddie a picture of the devoured plates food and made sure the empty egg plate and bowl of apple oatmeal was gone.

His response was a simple *'Proud of you* and a kissy face that

shouldn't have made Richie's knees weak, but it did.

He took his time in the shower, cleaning himself thoroughly and even took care to make sure the conditioner was out of his hair. He shaved and combed his hair, then stood in front of the clothes strung across his room.

There wasn't anything to wear that wasn't either pajamas or slouchy jeans. He hadn't anticipated seeing the first (only) person he'd loved here. He paced back and forth past the bed where he had a few options laid out. His palms were sweating and his hair was starting to frizz and felt damp with the sweat coating his temples.

Why was this so fucking hard? It shouldn't be a big deal, it was just clothes.

But Richie had an idea. An idea that involved taking a car to the nice restaurant he'd found on google that looked fancy but not pretentious and had lots of healthy options he thought Eddie would appreciate.

Thinking of Eddie helped the quick tick of his pulse. He followed the thought - sitting in a nice place with Eddie across from him, his dark eyes glowing in the dim lights, a mischievous smile on his lips.

He took a deep breath, held it for a second and then picked out the clothes he thought Eddie would like best. His opinion was the only one that mattered anyway.

-

Richie texted Eddie to meet him in the lobby at five thirty. A car was ordered and idling on the curb as he tried not to pace a path into the fancy cream carpet beneath him. When Eddie's blushing face came into view, Richie let out a breath he hadn't known he was holding.

"Hey Eds."

Eddie just gave him a shy smile, not even giving him shit for the nickname. He followed Richie's lead outside and into the uber waiting.

"So where are we going?" Eddie asked almost the second Richie was

in the car. He'd never been great at surprises.

"A surprise," he replied, grinning at the annoyed huff he got in return.

"You know I don't like surprises Richie," he said, as if that wasn't the whole reason he was being fucked with in the first place.

"It's nothing bad. We're just gonna go eat some snails and then I thought sky diving? Maybe regular diving in the freezing ocean? What do you think? Sound fun?"

God, Richie had missed the pinched look on his face and the way he rolled his eyes so hard he could probably see his brain.

"You're such an asshole," Eddie said quietly so the driver wouldn't hear.

Fuck, he was so cute. Richie willed himself to be brave and linked his fingers into Eddie's pulling their joined hands to his lips to kiss the soft skin of Eddie's hand. "Love you too, Eds."

He got a blush and squeeze of the hand and they settled in for the rest of the drive.

-

Eddie loved the restaurant. He had some sort of vegan risotto that was a dull grey color that looked like cat puke to Richie, but he was happy Eddie liked it. He had a steak and Eddie had told him red blood was bad for him, and told him the loaded baked potato he'd eaten, skin and all, would give him clogged arteries, but it was like music to Richie's ears. It was familiar and it was *them*.

-

Richie had planned other things for their evening; a short walk to a bookstore with a cafe where they could split a dessert and coffee, but as soon as the bill was paid and they were outside, Eddie was curling into his side and telling him to order a car back to the hotel.

They were so eager to get up to the room, he didn't even protest

when Richie drug him into the elevator. There was a family who joined the next floor up, and Richie wanted to do something stupid like pinch Eddie's butt, but like he could read his mind, he intertwined their fingers and gave him a scolding look. A shit eating grin took up most of Richie's face and it made a reluctant grin appear on Eddie's.

It felt like ages before they were on Richie's floor and they were both scrambling past the family, Eddie mumbling apologizes as he was towed by his arm to the room. It took Richie a few tries to have the card reader to blink green, but once he did they were in the room and Eddie was pressing him against the shut door.

Eddie wound his hands in Richie's hair and pulled him down to capture him in a bruising kiss. A pathetic sound left Richie's mouth without his permission, but he couldn't even care because Eddie was making his own noise and *fuck* Richie was gonna come in his pants like he was twelve.

"Wait, fuck Eddie," Richie panted into his mouth. He pulled away, even though every cell in his body begged him not to. "Slow right? I thought we were gonna take things slow?"

He made an offended noise and frowned up at Richie. "What makes you think I wanna take things slow?"

Richie blinked stupidly, feeling like he was missing something. "But? You said you had shit to work out, and you thanked me for waiting for you."

Eddie nodded sarcastically at him, making a duh motion. "Yeah, but what does that have to do with us having sex?"

He would never admit to anyone ever that his cock twitched at that, but he ignored it and moved to grab the letter from where it was carefully placed on the bedside table. He held it up to Eddie, pointing to the paper.

"You wrote, verbatim, *"it will take some time for me to have all my shit figured out. Thank you for waiting for me."*

Eddie rolled his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose like Richie's stupidity was giving him a headache.

"Things like my divorce, finding a place to live and store my shit, looking for a different job, maybe getting therapy - that's the shit I meant I needed to figure out. This-" he gestured between them, "I know I want this. This is already figured out."

There were the sweetest words Richie had ever heard and he wasted no more time pressing back into the door and kissing him.

-

It took a while and a few failed tries to get on the bed and get their clothes off. There was a lot of giggles and fake insults thrown as they grabbed and pulled at each other. It turned into a wrestling match at some point, and although Eddie was (unfairly, he was fucking *forty*) ripped in a non threatening way, Richie was taller. He gained the advantage and pinned Eddie under him, placing sloppy kisses all over his sweet face until Eddie was giggling.

He waited until Richie was distracted and tried to throw him off, so Richie laid all of his weight on top of him and kissed him, making it deep right away. Eddie resisted for a second, still trying to wiggle away, but then he seemed to decide his attention was needed elsewhere and slipped his tongue into Richie's waiting mouth.

Back when they were still in high school and were together, they'd done a lot. They'd been nervous and shaking the first time Richie gently placed his hand on Eddie's growing erection in the back of the Honda, but it didn't take long for it to be easy and practiced, no nerves.

They'd hadn't progressed past fingering, and even that had only been once, and it was the night before Richie's left for Chicago. The first guy Richie had sex with was some douche at a frat party who was short and dark, with mischievous brown eyes, and after he'd cried so hard the guy almost had to call an ambulance.

So really, Richie had every right to be shocked when Eddie asked if he had lube and condoms.

“Wha-?” Richie asked, pulling back from Eddie so fast he gave himself a crick in the neck.

“Why do you keep being so dense tonight? Are you really telling me a hot, famous, guy in his forties doesn’t have *any* items used for sex?”

“God,” Richie snorted. “Don’t say it like that.” He put on his Game Show Host Voice, “And there we have it folks, the number one answer for ‘Phrases that make Richie lose his boner’ is: *‘Items used for sex!’*”

Eddie scoffed but his face was trying not to let itself laugh. It made his face scrunch up so adorably, Richie didn’t even try and stop himself from kissing him. They melted into each other and it was agony for Richie to pull away and get up.

“Where are you going?” Eddie demanded, sitting up on his elbows impatiently as Richie dug through his bag. A few seconds later, he stood back up and held up the travel sized bottle of lube and roll of condoms. “Oh.”

“You sure about this Eds?” Richie asked, climbing back on the bed, throwing his legs around his waist, sitting on his thighs.

“One hundred percent,” he said solemnly, so Richie nodded and leaned down so they could kiss.

When Richie popped the cap to the lube and drizzled some of the liquid on his fingers, he reached back to prep his entrance, then Eddie grabbed a hold of his wrist.

“Aren’t you gonna fuck me?”

“Eds,” Richie whined, his cock twitching and leaking a large bead of precome down onto Eddie’s stomach.

“Sorry,” he chuckled breathlessly. He scrubbed his hands over his face and took a deep breath.

“Do you want to be on bottom? I’m fine with either, I just thought maybe you’d like this better.”

Eddie dropped his hands and nodded. "You're probably right. I've never done it the other way and it would probably only last like two seconds that way."

Richie grinned at him, pleased as pie. "Well I look forward to those two seconds, but we can take a rain check on those." He gave a cheesy wink that made Eddie giggle even though he was trying to frown.

Leaning down to resume their making out, Richie reached back and started prepping himself. Eddie's hands roamed his body, greedy and eager and it made Richie feel *so fucking wanted* that he could feel tears fogging up his glasses, but Eddie just wiped them off on the bedspread and replaced them with a kiss to the nose.

-

If he ever ended up telling the story of their first time having sex, Richie would admit with no shame what so ever that he only lasted forty-two seconds when Eddie finally bottomed out. Thankfully, Eddie followed a handful of breaths later, so at least they were both under the one minute mark. Wasn't stamina supposed to kick in when the short refractory period went away? Maybe it just didn't matter when you were finally doing it with the person who you loved most in the world.

-

The next morning Richie made Eddie order pancakes for breakfast with extra toppings, and he was so delighted that he actually ate it and *liked it*, that he couldn't resist ducking under the table, opening the fancy couples' robe and blowing him.

The whole day was a blur of room service, Die Hard movies and bickering about stupid shit while they cuddled on the couch and tried to go at least half an hour without making out.

(They couldn't).

-

November made its presence known about half way through the

night, freezing everything in place and letting piles of snow pile up all up and down the east coast.

Richie received a too early phone call that advised him that all flights out of JFK were cancelled until the snow relented, which according to the weather app on his phone, wouldn't be for close to a week. After checking with the other nearby airports, who had all their flights grounded as well, he called his agent and let him know. He listened to him yell at Richie for missing an important meeting like he could control the fucking weather.

Eddie sat next to him in bed, rubbing his back consolingly with his other hand typed furiously on his phone. Almost the exact second that Richie ended the call, Eddie was shoving his phone into Richie's face and telling him he had a business connection who owned a small plane that could make it to an airport in Philadelphia that he could board tomorrow afternoon.

"Eds, I have a free week with you here, do you really think I'm not gonna take advantage of that?"

"I don't want you to get in trouble though."

Richie's cupped his cheek and kissed him gently, reverently.

"I'm not in trouble Eds. My agent is an asshole, but he's an asshole I pay very well to deal with shit like this for me. I promise, I'm where I want to be. Where I need to be."

He said everything with all the sincerity he could muster. There was no joke, no punchline, just him - raw and vulnerable - and he was rewarded with the sight of Eddie's misty eyes and wide smile before they were kissing and the rest of the day just kind of melted into one long honey sweet moment Richie knew he'd be thinking about every day for the rest of his life.

-

Epilogue - three years later.

The hotel was just as nice as it had been the first time Richie visited, but his life changed so drastically it seemed odd to see something

that played such a big part in his happiness would not look any different.

Richie didn't get a chance to get caught up in nostalgia because he had a wedding, *his* wedding, he needed to get ready for, and he was already ten minutes behind the schedule Eddie had made and laminated that had his whole day planned out in five minute increments.

Bill, Ben and Stan were already in the room reserved for the groom's party. They all told him that he was ten minutes behind when he arrived. They were all already dressed and ready and Richie still needed to shower, so he wasted no time telling them to fuck off, just got straight into the freezing water.

-

He'd been precisely two minutes and thirty-nine seconds late, but Bev must have finally convinced Eddie to smoke the joint she'd brought for the exact purpose of calming his frantic body, because Eddie just smiled lazily when they met in front of the doors to where the ceremony was set.

The Losers walked down the aisle in alternating fashion and stood on their respective spaces. The maroon and navy clothes flattered everyone so well but today was his wedding day, and nothing was gonna make Richie feel anything other than the luckiest guy on the god damn planet today.

Eddie linked his arm with Richie's and they walked down the aisle to an instrumental version of "We Belong."

It was perfect and Richie didn't care about any of it when Eddie's lips were pressed against his and they were being announced as *husbands*. They kissed a bit longer than was maybe appropriate in front of their friends and family, but whatever. They were married.

-

There were plenty of embarrassing speeches from all the Losers, roasting them with affection coating every word. They congratulated

them and said they were loved, each telling Richie in their own not-so-subtle ways that they were glad he'd finally pulled his head out of his ass.

When almost everyone was gone, the losers gathered around the DJ and demanded he played "Take on me" on repeat for the rest of the night. They danced too much for old they were, and Richie knew he was gonna be hungover as fuck in the morning but it was worth it.

He was surrounded by all the people he loved most in the world and he was married to the love of his life. That was worth all the hangovers in the world.

Author's Note:

you can find this fic on [tumblr](#)

big shout out to Mandy for all the help with this!